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April 11, 2016

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H.  
Interim Director

SUBJECT: MONTHLY STATUS REPORT ON EXIDE

On February 16, 2016, Supervisor Solis introduced a motion instructing the Health Agency Director to report back to the Board at its March 8, 2016 meeting, and monthly thereafter, on the progress of issues related to Exide Technologies (Exide), a former battery recycling facility in Vernon, California. This report provides the second update on these issues and related efforts.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is leading this effort for the Health Agency and is focusing on three areas: (1) rapidly assessing residential properties in the neighborhoods in the vicinity of Exide that have potentially been impacted by its operations; (2) addressing the current and future health needs of residents in the affected neighborhoods; and (3) influencing State decision-making to address health needs of the communities near Exide with greater urgency, including the allocation of increased funding for rapid, complete assessment and clean-up of the affected residences. Additionally, at the instruction of your Board, DPH will initiate soil testing at the County-owned Dorothy Kirby Center Juvenile Camp and adjoining parks.

### Rapid Assessment of Residential Properties

Between February 29 and March 9, 2016, DPH assessed lead in soil on a total of 500 residential properties. The testing was carried out by 12 three-person teams in the communities of Maywood, Commerce, and East Los Angeles. The teams tested properties at a rate of approximately 48 per day during fair weather. All 500 properties were fully tested by March 9, 2016, two days ahead of schedule.

The 500 properties were characterized as follows:

Group	Soil Lead Concentration mg/kg	Number of properties	Percentage of Properties
1	Above 1,000	45	9%
2	400-1,000	179	35.8%
3	80-399	268	53.6%
4	Below 80	8 (4 with no soil)	1.6%

Following the soil testing, each household was visited by DPH staff, Public Health Nurses and Health Educators, who explained the soil testing results, offered information, and answered any questions. Further, DPH is providing the results of the rapid assessments to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Clean-up of properties is the responsibility of the DTSC and will be prioritized based on soil lead concentrations, as well as other factors potentially contributing to health risk.

### **Testing at the Dorothy Kirby Center Juvenile Camp and Adjoining Parks**

The DTSC performed soil testing at the park adjacent to the Dorothy Kirby Juvenile Camp, Bristow Park, on March 11, 2016. The results were below 80 mg/kg, indicating no need for further action. DPH has reviewed and approved a proposal to conduct soil testing at the Dorothy Kirby Center Juvenile Camp, and testing there will be initiated shortly.

### **Addressing Current and Future Health Needs of Residents**

All three departments in the Health Agency are collaborating to ensure access to care and specialized health screening for the early identification and treatment of potential health problems caused by the environmental contamination from the Exide facility. Public Health Nurses have made 45 home visits to residents whose properties have a lead concentration greater than 1000mg/kg. During these visits, residents are educated on the actions they can take to help protect their health and are encouraged to obtain blood lead tests. DPH will continue to provide this service in coordination with DTSC as DTSC works to sample all 10,000 properties in the affected area.

In addition, community health workers (*promotoras*) from the Department of Mental Health will canvass neighborhoods to encourage participation in health screening programs. On March 4, 2016, 25 *promotoras* were trained to deliver key messages through door-to-door outreach, parent meetings, and community- and faith-based events. This neighborhood canvassing effort began on April 4, 2016.

A bilingual letter and information on community resources will be mailed to over 14,000 households in the area surrounding Exide by April 29, 2016. The letter includes information on lead exposure, cancer, and stress management, as well as where to receive health care services. Health care services are being offered at four Department of Health Services facilities, Hubert Humphrey Comprehensive Health Center, Martin Luther King, Jr. Outpatient Center, Edward Roybal Comprehensive Health Center, and H. Claude Hudson Comprehensive Health Center.

Two community health fairs were held in the communities surrounding Exide as part of Public Health Week. On April 7, 2016 a Community Health Fair was held at Bell Gardens Intermediate School in collaboration with the Montebello Unified School District. Free blood lead screening was offered to attendees. On April 9, 2016 eight separate health and book fairs were held in partnership with the County Libraries, including one at the East Los Angeles Library. Health education information about exposure to lead and referrals to free blood lead testing were offered at the event.

### **County Advocacy to Secure Increased State Funding for the Exide Assessment and Clean-up**

As noted in the previous update, Governor Jerry Brown proposed an additional \$176.6 million for the FY 2015-16 State Budget for the clean-up of properties affected by Exide, and SB 93 was amended by Senators de Leon and Lara to allocate these funds. SB 93 was recently amended to loan the \$176.6 million from the State General Fund to DTSC to use for the assessment and clean-up of properties in the communities surrounding Exide, support job training activities related to the investigation and clean-up



of the properties and fund cost recovery actions against potentially responsible parties. Any funds ultimately recovered from the responsible parties will be used to repay this loan to the State General Fund.

Informational hearings about the bills related to Exide clean-up, SB 93 and AB 118, were held on April 6, 2016 before the Assembly and Senate Budget committees. SB 93 is expected to be taken up on the Assembly Floor on April 11, 2016. AB 118 is a companion bill to SB 93 that was recently amended to allocate the \$176.6 million to DTSC's budget. It was heard on April 6, 2016 in the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, and it passed the committee by a vote of 13-0. On April 7, 2016, AB 118 passed the Senate by a vote of 38-0. I testified at the Senate Budget hearing on April 6, 2016 in support of the legislative package. The County supports SB 93 and AB 118 and the Sacramento advocates continue to work with legislators, legislative staff, and the Brown Administration to support the funding.

In addition to the increased funding, the Governor previously proposed to exempt the residential clean-up from the requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to help expedite the clean-up of the affected properties. This proposal generated significant opposition from environmental justice groups and from community leaders. On March 30, 2016, the Administration dropped the CEQA exemption, and thus it is not part of the legislative package. The Chief Executive Officer and the County's Sacramento advocates will continue to actively advocate for the funding, and will keep the Board apprised of these efforts.

Monthly updates on the work related to Exide will continue to be provided, as directed by your Board. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

CAH:ab

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors